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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 001282

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

FOR WHA ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARTURO VALENZUELA AND INL  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY DAVID JOHNSON FROM AMBASSADOR HUGO  
LLORENS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: TFH01: PROPOSED RESPONSE TO INCREASED DRUG  
TRAFFICKING AND VIOLENCE IN HONDURAS

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 1268  
[1](#)B. TEGUCIGALPA 1198  
[1](#)C. BOGOTA 3780  
[1](#)D. STATE 69221

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: The Mission suspended some aspects of joint counternarcotics activity with the GOH as a result of the June 28 coup d'etat. Over the course of calendar 2009, narcotics trafficking through Honduras has significantly increased compared to 2008, a trend that had begun well before the coup. Also in 2009, there has been a marked increase in the murder rate and a number of high-profile assassinations, most recently the December 8 killing of the director of anti-narcotics operations (Ref A), which have raised concerns over the effects of trafficking groups on overall security. As a result, we propose a resumption of some anti-narcotics activities in Honduras. End summary.

[1](#)2. (U) As a result of the June 28 coup d'etat and the no contact policy with the de facto regime that took power (Ref D), military to military assistance and operations, as well as security sector assistance procurements were suspended in Honduras. While the USG continues to share trafficking information with the Honduran National Police (HNP), the Embassy reduced joint interdiction operations with the Honduran police (although these resumed effective in October) and suspended such operations with the Honduran Armed Forces. Since the coup, the de facto regime's decision to deploy security forces to the capital and devote the bulk of its resources to the task of maintaining order and controlling demonstrations by the opposition has severely diminished the ability of the HNP and the HOAF to fight narco trafficking.

[1](#)3. (U) Even before the coup, trafficking through Honduras in 2009 was increasing; the trend continued post-coup and now points to a doubling of illegal drugs transiting Honduras in 2009 compared to 2008 figures (Ref B). With this increase in trafficking, there has also been an increase in violent crime, as well as an increase in high-profile killings suspected to be related to the drug traffic, including the assassination of Honduras' National Director of Counter-Narcotics, General Aristides Gonzalez on December 8

(ref A). (Note: The homicide rate in Honduras was 58 per 100,000 population in 2008, and UNDP predicts the rate will exceed 60 in 2009. Details to be reported septel. End note)

14. (SBU) In response to the increased trafficking and violence, Post would like to take additional measures in support for the anti-narcotics fight. The Embassy proposes the immediate resumption of the following anti-narcotics activities designed to emphasize support of the Honduran police while minimizing interaction with the Honduran military:

--Procure and donate INL-funded police equipment in support of HNP anti-trafficking and border control operations. Donations to be resumed would include three converted containers to be used by border police as border control stations at crossings where they currently have no facilities; radios, motorcycles and other equipment to assist border police to patrol remote unguarded border crossings and trafficking zones along the Atlantic coast; and radios, protective gear, off-road vehicles and other tactical equipment for the DEA-supported joint tactical response unit (TRT) of the Honduran police.

--Procure and donate fuel to the Honduran Navy to use in interceptor boats for coastal and riverine interdiction operations. SOUTHCOM has made USD 20,000 available for this purpose. An estimated four times more drugs are transmitted into Honduras by sea than by air. Post believes this support could significantly improve anti-drug operations with a low probability of publicity. It also has the advantage of giving support to the only branch of the armed forces that

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did not directly participate in the June 28 coup.

--Resume the shiprider program to place police, though not military, personnel on U.S. Coast Guard and naval vessels in support of maritime interdiction operations in Honduran territorial waters beyond the operational reach of HOAF vessels. (Note: Pre-coup, the shiprider program placed both police and armed forces personnel on U.S. vessels; this proposal is to resume only the police element at present. End note).

--Provide jungle commando training to members of the vetted TRT (Ref D).

--Send police representatives to the Joint Interagency Task Force-South Operations Center Interoperability Conference January 27-29, 2010 in the Dominican Republic. Travel would be paid out of SOUTHCOM TCA funds. The purpose of police participation would be to support recently begun DEA efforts in standing up an Interagency Counter Illicit Trafficking Operations Center, run by the Honduran police, but staffed by police and military personnel.  
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